

Message Text

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46

ACTION ARA-20

INFO OCT-01 ADP-00 OMB-01 AID-20 EUR-25 SS-15 NSC-10 L-03

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FM AMEMBASSY GEORGETOWN

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8744

INFO AMEMBASSY BRIDGETOWN

AMEMBASSY KINGSTON

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USCINCSO

UNCLAS GEORGETOWN 1217

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT, GY

SUBJEC&: GUYANA NATIONAL ASSEMBLY APPROVES CONSTITUTIONAL
AMENDMENTS

REF: GEORGETOWN 1173

1. IN AUGUST 15 SESSION, GUYANA NATIONAL ASSEMBLY APPROVED CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENTS ABOLISHING RIGHT OF APPEAL TO PRIVY COUNCIL AND GIVING EIGHTEEN YEAR OLDS FULL CONSTITUTIONAL RIGHTS. BOTH MEASURES, PRESENTED IN SINGLE BILL, RECEIVED TWO-THIRDS VOTE NECESSARY TO AMEND CONSTITUTION WHEN THIRTY-SIX PARLIAMENTARIANS OF RULING PEOPLE'S NATIONAL CONGRESS IN ATTENDANCE VOTED IN FAVOR. ENACTMENT OF AMENDMENTS REPRESENTS FULFILLMENT OF PNC ELECTION CAMPAIGN PLEDGE AND IS FIRST SIGNIFICANT USE OF PARTY'S TWO-THIRDS MAJORITY. LONE OPPOSITION MEMBER OF ASSEMBLY, MARCELLUS FEILDEN-SINGH ABSTAINED. REMAINING FIFTEEN SEATS VACANT DUE TO BOYCOTT.

2. MAJOR PROVISION OF CONSTITUTIONAL REFORM BILL RELATING
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TO PRIVY COUNCIL ENDS POSITION OF JUDICIAL COMMITTEE OF PRIVY

COUNCIL, COMPOSED OF BRITISH JURISTS, AS HIGHEST COURT OF APPEAL IN GUYANA JUDICIAL SYSTEM. NOW GUYANA'S OWN COURT OF APPEAL HAS FINAL WORD IN CASES DEALING WITH CONSTITUTIONAL MATTERS AND PRESIDENT, WITH ADVICE OF SPECIAL TRIBUNAL, WILL RULE ON CASES OF JUDICIAL INCAPACITY OR MISBEHAVIOR. SECOND PART OF CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENTS BILL REDUCES FROM TWENTY-ONE TO EIGHTEEN AGE FOR ACQUIRING POLITICAL AND LEGAL RIGHTS UNDER CONSTITUTION INCLUDING RIGHT TO VOTE AND RIGHT TO SIT IN PARLIAMENT.

3. IN CHOOSING TO ABSTAIN ON BILL, FEILDEN-SINGH STATED HIS PURPOSE WAS TO EXPRESS APPROVAL OF CONSTITUTIONAL RIGHTS FOR EIGHTEEN YEAR OLDS AND DISAPPROVAL OF ABOLITION OF RIGHT OF APPEAL TO PRIVY COUNCIL. AUGUST 15 SESSION OF ASSEMBLY WAS FIRST SINCE CHIEF ELECTION OFFICER REGINALD BULTER DECIDED THAT FEILDEN-SINGH'S BREAK WITH LIBERATOR PARTY (REFTEL) WOULD NOT MEAN LOSS OF SEAT WHICH WAS WON IN ELECTION BY LIBERATOR LIST.
SHERRY

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